

# Bible Heroes

John the  
Baptist

Teachers  
Story notes



## Essential Teachers notes:

The story of John the Baptist is one of many levels and as such has many elements that be be drawn out. There is the survivalist, wearing skins and eating honey, the prophecy, a new Elijah, the rabbi, who loses his disciples to Jesus, the transformer, baptising people in repentance, and the humble, who recognises his cousins role long before the others. This story focuses on the last though any of the themes could easily be given more emphasis.

## Main Passage : Exodus 3-4

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John's life was amazing. His dad, Zechariah, had been an old priest in the temple and his mum, Elizabeth was old when he was born too. There's a whole amazing story about how he was born, but today's story happens when he was grown up.

It's not surprising that John wasn't like other kids. When he got old enough he set off into the wilderness and desert. He made himself clothes from camel skins, he ate locusts and wild honey. John knew God had a plan for him and that was to get people ready for what was coming.

So, John started telling people that they needed to change their lives, to think differently, to turn around and face towards God, to get rid of all the nasty stuff in their lives, to act right. Someone special was coming, said John, someone who would change everything.

Lots of people were impressed with John and would go and listen to him. John used a symbol to show that people agreed to change. He would walk out into the cool river with them and dip them under the water, this was called baptism. He did this to show that their old ways of living life were washing away with the water and they could start living a new kind of life with God.

Not everyone liked John, some of the things he said made people really angry. Other people loved John, some even became his disciples, following him and his teachings.

One day someone unexpected came to see John... this man's name was Jesus.

John saw him coming and knew exactly who he was. He told his disciples, "This is the one I meant when I said, 'After me comes the one more powerful than I am, the straps of his sandals I am not worthy to bend down and untie.' This is the one who will baptise not with water but with the spirit of God."

Jesus walked up to John and asked to be baptised. John was amazed. Jesus didn't need to be baptised. Jesus already had the new kind of life with God. John tried to say no. John had a special quality called humility. Humility means that you recognise that you are God's servant, that God is much greater than you, and you respect great things in other people. John said 'no' to Jesus because he thought he wasn't worthy.

But Jesus had other plans. He lead John into the water and whispered, "it's part of the big plan John, please baptise me". John dipped Jesus into the water and then stood back as Jesus stood up, water dripping from his hair and his clothes. The clouds in the sky seemed to disappear, the light got brighter and something seemed to be falling from the sky onto Jesus, like a bird it floated down and rested on him. Then a voice came, not from John, or Jesus, or the crowd but from heaven.

"This is my son" said the voice "and I am very happy with him"

John stood amazed. Everyone stared at Jesus. Some of Johns disciples followed Jesus when he finally walked away, John wasn't upset, he was happy for them. John had recognised how great Jesus was. John knew, that even though all those people came to listen to him, he wasn't important enough to even do the job of the lowest servant and untie Jesus' sandals.

**Today's hero is John the Baptist because he shows us the gift of a humility**